

VZCZCXR07196

PP RUEHAO RUEHCD RUEHGA RUEHGD RUEHHA RUEHHO RUEHMC RUEHMT RUEHNG
RUEHNL RUEHOU RUEHRD RUEHRC RUEHRS RUEHTM RUEHVC
DE RUEHCV #0615/01 1381730
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 181730Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3061
INFO RUEHWL/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS
RHMCSSU/FAA MIAMI ARTCC MIAMI FL
RUCNFB/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RUEAHLC/DHS WASHDC
RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
RUEABND/DEA HQ WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 000615

SIPDIS

HQ SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
COMMERCE FOR 4332/MAC/WH/JLAO
TREASURY FOR RJARPE
NSC FOR RKING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/16/2019

TAGS: [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [EINV](#) [EAIR](#) [CASC](#) [CVIS](#) [ASEC](#)

KHLS, PTER, SNAR, VE

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN AIRLINE WITH POSSIBLE DRUG TIES TO FLY
TO U.S.?

REF: A. CARACAS 407
[1](#)B. 2008 CARACAS 1702

Classified By: A/Economic Counselor Richard T. Yoneoka for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

[¶](#)1. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Post requests information on whether or not Venezuelan carrier Aeropostal is cleared to commence flights to the United States and any information, derogatory or otherwise, on U.S.-based company Aircraft Parts and Pieces, Inc.

[¶](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: President of Venezuelan airline Aeropostal, Dr. Mustafa Flores, told Econoff May 13 that Aeropostal has all the required U.S. and Venezuelan permits to begin flights to the United States as early as June 2009. Flores claims the Venezuelan government has mended fences with the Makled family, the owners of Aeropostal, after the government seized the airline in November 2008 due to the arrest of two Makled family members on drug charges. Flores is now working with a second company of unclear ownership to begin U.S.-based charter flights to various points in Latin America. END SUMMARY.

[¶](#)3. (C) Flores reported that although Aeropostal, owned by the Makled family, was "preventatively seized" after two members of the family were arrested on drug trafficking charges in November 2008 (Refs A and B), the Makled family and the Venezuelan government are now working hand in hand to run Aeropostal. Makled appointed managers, in conjunction with a government-established "temporary administration board," jointly operate the airline. He added that in spite of the on-going Makled family criminal investigation, the airline has recently found financial success, so much so that Aeropostal has leased a new aircraft. Flores claimed that while on paper he is still the president of Aeropostal, he has not gone to the office in four months, as he no longer wants to be publicly associated with the Makleds.

[¶](#)4. (C) Flores has instead started working with a company called Aircraft Parts and Pieces (APP), Inc., located in Miami, where he has laid the ground work for charter flight operations originating in Miami and New York. He said the charter flights may commence as early as the end of May 2009 with a route from Miami to Santo Domingo, Santo Domingo to

Caracas, and a route from Miami to Lima. Flores was very vague about who actually owns APP and would only say that while the company started off as part of Venezuelan carrier Aeropostal, it separated, moved to the U.S., and started selling aircraft parts in early 2008. In addition to its parts business, APP is now seeking to begin operating charter flights as noted above.

¶15. (C) INS approved Aircraft Parts and Pieces, Inc. petition on behalf of Flores for an L1A Nonimmigrant Worker Visa on March 5, 2009. On the petition Flores' name appears as Jose Manuel Mustafa. Post has not issued the L1A visa in part because the company, APP, has so far failed to provide adequate documentation supporting the petition.

¶16. (C) As per paragraph one, Post requests information on whether or not Aeropostal is cleared to fly to the United States, and additional information on U.S.-based company Aircraft Parts and Pieces, Inc.

COMMENT:

¶17. (C) If Flores' claims are true, then Aeropostal is prospering under the joint administration of the Makled family and Venezuelan government while all other domestic airlines are nearing bankruptcy (septel). This situation raises questions about the current nature of the relationship between the government and the Makled family. Additionally, the ties between Flores and the Makleds may be closer than Flores would like to admit and warrant scrutiny before visa issuance, as does the ownership structure of the company Aircraft Parts and Pieces, Inc., which was originally part of

CARACAS 00000615 002 OF 002

Makled-owned Aeropostal.

GENNATIEMPO